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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

THE SITUATION IN CENTRAL AMERICA: PROCEDURES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE AND PROGRESS IN FASHIONING A REGION OF PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Establishment of a human rights verification mission in Guatemala

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/48/L.63/Rev.1

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

Eighteenth report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the statement (A/C.5/48/84) submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly on the programme budget implications of the proposal to establish a human rights verification mission in Guatemala as contained in draft resolution A/48/L.63/Rev.1.

2. Should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would establish a verification mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA) in accordance with the recommendations contained in his report (A/48/985) for an initial period of six months.

3. On the basis of assumptions outlined in paragraphs 2 to 4 of his statement of programme budget implications, the Secretary-General estimates that additional requirements under section 4 of the programme budget for 1994-1995 would amount to $16,291,800 net, of which $8,393,200 relates to personnel costs, such as salaries, fees, travel and related allowances. The balance, $7,898,600, relates to operational costs, such as rental and maintenance of premises and vehicles and purchase of furniture, vehicles and communication equipment.

4. The Committee notes the Secretary-General's comments in paragraph 38 of his report (A/48/985) and his reasons for seeking financing under section 4 of the regular budget. The Advisory Committee further notes from paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's report that "the purpose of the present report is accordingly to recommend that the General Assembly decide now to authorize the establishment of a United Nations Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA). After the signature of the Agreement for a Firm and Lasting Peace, [the Secretary-General will] make recommendations for the verification of other agreements contained in it." In this connection, the Advisory Committee was informed by representatives of the Secretary-General that it was the intention, once a final peace agreement had been signed, to seek Security Council approval for a peace-keeping operation and to establish a special account for that purpose.

5. The Advisory Committee notes from the Secretary-General's report that the estimated requirements are based on the findings of a preliminary mission. The Advisory Committee trusts that, after the adoption of draft resolution A/48/L.63/Rev.1 by the General Assembly, the estimates will be refined and will be specifically related to a detailed and more specific plan of operation. The Advisory Committee also trusts that the possibility of obtaining assistance from the host Government in the form of premises and other services, such as landing fees, will be thoroughly explored and negotiated in the context of a status-of-mission agreement.

6. Annex III to the Secretary-General's statement contains a proposed staffing table, which indicates a total of 56 staff at the Professional level, including 1 D-2, 2 D-1, 14 P-5, 12 P-4, 22 P-3 and 5 P-2; 39 General Service staff; 30 Field Service staff; and 72 United Nations Volunteers (UNV). In addition, 10 military observers and 60 civilian police are proposed. Staffing according to organizational units is also shown in annex III to the statement. In order to achieve the best balance between administrative and substantive staff, the Advisory Committee believes that staffing requirements should be reviewed and determined in relation to the activities to be carried out within the operational plan with a view to streamlining the number and/or grade level of the administrative structure. Moreover, appropriate administrative support for all regional centres should be ensured from within the resources projected.

7. The Advisory Committee believes that five P-5 posts, in addition to a D-1 post for the administrative, personnel and finance functions of the Mission, is excessive and should be reviewed after the finalization of an operational plan.

8. Staffing requirements should also take into account the availability of national Professionals in Guatemala and other countries in the region. Upon inquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that it would be possible to expand the proposed UNV staffing component of 72 by an additional 10 to 15 UNVs, thus lowering the total resources request for staffing by reducing the number of international civilian staff.

9. From the information provided to it, the Committee understands that the staffing component includes a resident auditor at the P-4 level assisted by a General Service staff member and a resident management review officer at the P-4 level. While the Committee commends the emphasis on audit and compliance

functions, the Committee does not at this stage recommend that the audit function be carried out by resident field staff; the services could be provided from Headquarters. As for the resident management review officer, the Committee does not recommend its establishment at this stage. The Committee intends to revert to the question in the context of the consideration of the Secretary-General's report contained in document A/48/945.

10. The Advisory Committee notes from paragraph 21 of the Secretary-General's report (A/48/985) that resource mobilization efforts would be a component of the Mission's activities and that the Mission would coordinate efforts within the United Nations system to obtain international financing for specific projects. The Committee trusts that there will be no duplication between United Nations Headquarters and Mission headquarters in their respective efforts to mobilize resources. The Advisory Committee trusts further that the resources made available through these efforts will be reflected in the performance report for MINUGUA. The Advisory Committee notes the absence from the Secretary-General's statement of a description of the involvement of the existing human rights entities within the United Nations.

11. Paragraph 6 of the Secretary-General's statement indicates that the estimates include an amount of $2,560,600 for the transfer of 132 vehicles and surplus equipment from other missions. The Committee has in the past commented on the question of "double charging" for equipment to be transferred from one mission to another and stated its intention to look into the matter (see for example A/46/904, para. 9; A/46/945, para. 27; and A/47/990, para. 29).

12. In this connection, the Advisory Committee recalls General Assembly resolution 48/240 B on the financing of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique and decision 48/496 on the administrative and budgetary aspects of the financing of the United Nations peace-keeping operations. In that decision, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to "study the feasibility of a procedure by which assets to be redeployed from a peace-keeping operation during its liquidation phase to other peace-keeping operations or other United Nations bodies should be transferred only after the value of the assets has been determined and provision made, in the budgets of the receiving operations, to reimburse the special account of the operation from which the assets are provided, this liability to be met as expeditiously as possible upon receipt of funds".

13. With regard to the total number of vehicles proposed to be acquired for the Mission, the Advisory Committee believes that the number of 132 is excessive; the Committee recommends a reduction of 22 vehicles for a total of 110. Similarly, the Committee believes that the requirements for electronic data-processing equipment such as computers and printers has been overestimated. The Committee recommends a reduction of 53 computers, i.e. a total of 150 instead of 203, and a reduction of 82 printers, i.e. 70 instead of 152.

14. In the light of the above observations and recommendations and pending the final decision of the General Assembly on the mode of financing and the receipt of the study referred to in paragraph 12 above, the Advisory Committee recommends that the Secretary-General, at this stage, be authorized to enter into commitments not exceeding $12.9 million under section 4 of the programme

budget for 1994-1995. The actual amount to be appropriated will be determined on the basis of the performance report on the 1994-1995 budget to be submitted to the General Assembly towards the end of 1994.